

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

T/III-I/M-2
31 March 1965

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD
COMMITTEE ON DOCUMENTATION

TASK TEAM III - WORKING GROUP ON TRANSLITERATION

Minutes of the Second Meeting, 22 March 1965

Members or Their Representatives Present

25X1 CIA - [redacted] Chairman
NSA - [redacted]
25X1 ARMY - Mr. Henry Holz
NAVY - Mr. P. Thomas Koines
Mr. D. E. Ashworth
25X1 AIR FORCE - Mr. Wieslaw Arlet, ATD-LoC
CSS - [redacted] Secretary

Others Present

None

1. Minutes of the first meeting of the Working Group were distributed, reviewed and approved with minor corrections. Members were requested to provide mailing addresses, telephone numbers and hours spent on Working Group matters since the last meeting.

25X1 2. [redacted] distributed a paper entitled Transliteration of Modern Russian by Jerrold Orne, Chairman, Sub-committee 5: Transliteration Committee Z39, American Standards Association.

25X1 3. [redacted] indicated his desire to obtain information on the amount of traffic involving the transliteration problem which is currently moving between agencies, with emphasis on volume of data in machine readable form or data intended to be machined. [redacted] noted that the SCIPS survey 25X1 had addressed this area. Some discussion of the currency and applicability of SCIPS data ensued. [redacted] was requested to check SCIPS holdings and to develop available information on the flow of this type of data by sending and receiving agencies. Secondly, [redacted] was requested to do the same for 25X1 that pertinent data which is not in machine readable form.

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Group 1
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4. The problem at hand was restated by [] as in part preparing 25X1 for the future. We must initiate action now to assure that the Community is prepared to take advantage of present and future capabilities offered by automation. It was agreed that concentration on the detailed ramifications of the Russian translation problem would sharply define the group's task within the Terms of Reference. Some discussion ensued concerning convertability versus standardization in transliteration. It was pointed out that neither approach could accomodate ambiguity.

5. At present, there are ^{four} ~~three~~ major systems of transliteration being used in the Community, i.e., BGN, LOC, ^{BSI} and NSA's system. Mr. Arlet emphasized that the foregoing transliteration systems are used to output from translation systems. So long as one remains within a given system and its transliteration method, machine comparisons and other data processing can be accomplished with minimal probability of mismatch. The problem of reversability was raised. It was suggested that the need for reversability be identified and defined. There was then some discussion of phonemics and the requirement for ease in correct pronunciation by a non-linguist, which may result in ambiguous (not one-for-one character) transliteration. It was suggested that our purpose might be narrowed to determining need for standard transliteration systems to be used in machine files which are subject to interagency exchange. It was the consensus that this might avoid anticipated problems of implementation but wouldn't solve the basic problem of availing the community now, and in the future, of the substantial capabilities of computers to aid in foreign language publication exploitation. [] 25X1 indicated that FDD is moving in the direction of machine output and he felt that an unambiguous method of transliteration will be a critical factor in use of their anticipated machine products throughout the Community.

25X1 6. [] discussed some of the characteristics of a proposed system of transliteration now in reproduction at NSA. He noted that some change to the existing system used at NSA would be required. As far as converting files from old to new systems the decision to do so would probably be based on need and usage factors. [] also touched upon the 25X1 use of a special character set in conjunction with a machine language producing typewriter. Such a character set would among other things produce combined characters CH or SH on a single key/stroke with their own unique binary representations for machine operations.

25X1 7. [] emphasized that there were relatively few problem characters in transliteration of the Cyrillic alphabet. The group examined the Draft Table for Modern Russian Letters which appears in the paper 25X1 provided by [] mentioned in paragraph 2, and identified these problems as follows: Nos. 6, 10, 22, 23, 26, 28. [] indicated that 25X1 problems were indicated between 24 and 25 and 26. The use of the \$ for SH and ¢ for CH was discussed as an interesting possibility.

25X1 8. The group then took up the Terms of Reference. After some discussion, [] were requested to develop a working

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25X1 paper on Task c. - Transliteration impact on indexing. [] was requested to prepare a paper on Task d. - Automation, retrieval and the transliteration problem with special reference to the need for interchangeability and reversability. Mr. Arlet was asked to provide a paper on Task g. - Problem of prescribed transliteration systems for geographic names (BGN). These papers should be available for discussion at the next Working Group meeting. [] noted that the results of these assignments would probably incorporate some of the information called for in Tasks a, b, e, and f. He also indicated that Task h. - Recommendations on the need for standardized systems of transliteration, would follow as a group endeavor.

9. The group was also asked to be prepared at the next meeting to discuss in a general way what their agencies were doing in connection with the transliteration problem and what, if any, were their plans for the future.

10. The next meeting of the Working Group will be held at CIA Headquarters at 0900 hours on 7 April 1965.

25X1
[]
Secretary

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